Three Godly

SERMONS.

I. The Wrath of GOD against Sinners.

II. GODS Eternitie, and Mans Humanitie.

III. The Plantation of the Righteous.

By *T. H.*

ROM. 1. 18.

The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodlineſſe and unrighteouſneſſe of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſſe.

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THE VVRATH of God againſt SINNERS.

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The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, againſt all ungodlineſſe and unrighteouſneſſe of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſſe.

IN the fore going verſes, the holy Apoſtle, by way of Preface; prepareth way for the truth that hee would

deliver, and the doctrine he purposed to dispence of, and that all cavils might be removed; and that the Word of God might take deeper root and better acceptance, hee uses these three particulars;

1 and first hee cleares the authority of his challenge, hee came not before hee was sent of God, and therefore being called, it concerned him, and was his duty to do good.

2. He discovers the tenderneſſe of his love, and his marvellous readineſſe to do them good, in the 12, 13, and 14 verses. It was a debt the Apostle ought the *Romans*, therefore hee ought to pay it; and now way being made, he comes to the maine

maine point, that is, That a man is not juſtified by doing, but by beleeving; and this he confirmeth; firſt by the teſtimony of Scripture, that a man is juſtified by faith, and not by workes, ye ſhall live by faith. 1

Secondly, by force of Argument, and that after this manner; If all men by the workes of the Law, cannot ſhunne the wrath of God, then a man cannot be ſaved by the workes of the Law. This hee propounds in the words of the Text, and proſecutes it in the Chapter following, and affirmes that neither of them can be ſaved by the works of the Law. 2

Firſt, In the Text obſerve theſe two particulars: firſt, 1

the dealing of wicked men with the truth of God, they *hold the truth of God in unrighteousnesse*.

Secondly, Gods dealing with them, they dealt roughly with the truth, they laid violent hands on it, and God he deales as rigorously with them.

And the reason why they hold downe the truth, is, because of some lust in their soules that is beloved of them.

Secondly, The Apostle shewes against whom Gods wrath commeth.

Thirdly, The universality in these words *All*. God doth not deale partially, but all that mispriſon the truth in unrighteousnesse shall have

have the wrath of God denounced againſt them.

Fourthly, The place from whence it ſhall come, (from heaven.)

Firſt, we are here to know what is meant by truth: For the better underſtanding of the Text: Truth carries two things with it.

Firſt, The rule of righteouſneſſe, which is that homage and obedience we owe unto God; and this rule of righteouſneſſe is the moſt excellent rule that is.

Secondly, Truth carrieth in it ſelfe, the efficacy and power of truth, and therefore the Apoſtle *Paul* ſharply reproves *Peter*, *Gal.* 2. 14. *verſe*; that though he obſerved the Goſpel in the

maine, yet he did not walke with a ſtraight foot.

Secondly, What is meant by holding the truth of God in unrighteouſneſſe.

To hold the truth of God in unrighteouſneſſe, is by a kind of violence, and ſtrong hand to hinder the operation and paſſage of it, that the Word cannot performe that worke which otherwiſe it would in the hearts of them to whom it is ſent.

Thirdly, What is meant by the word unrighteouſneſſe.

In ſome places it ſignifies a ſinne that is committed againſt the ſecond Table onely; but here in this place it implies all ſinful diſtempers, and corruptions of heart, and this

this word (in) unrighteouſneſſe, It carries the cauſe and authority, as when a man ſayes, ſtop ſuch a man in my name.

1 *Doct.* The truth of God is operative.

2 *Doct.* That wicked men are enemies to the Word of God.

3 *Doct.* That the corruptions of mens hearts, is the cauſe of the hinderance of the word. But I will draw them all into one.

Doct. That carnall and corrupt hearts hinder the power of the truth from working upon them, or prevailing with them, as much as in them lies.

It is true, that truth is powerfull, and will prevaile; for

when he ſends his truth to worke upon any corrupt heart, he doth not ſtand to aske our wils, whether we will receive or not, but hee will make it effectuall; hee will ſhake off all oppoſitions, and he will drive all before him; but let the Lord do what he *will*, yet the carnall heart will reſiſt and ſtand out, and as much as in him lies, labour to keep out the Word; *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. Though Heathens be ſtrangers from the life of God, and from the Covenant of Grace; yet this little remainder of the Law of God in their hearts, which remaines will be a working in them; ſo that murder and uncleanneſſe, they will puniſh with death.

The

The truth is discovered three wayes.

First, when a man is about to commit any sinne, as to steale, &c. his conscience wil smite him; and so in other sinnes.

Secondly, the power and efficacy of God may be observed in the Creation, yet the darknesse of mens eyes, or the foggishnesse of their understandings, do interpose themselves.

Thirdly, by truth, is meant the preaching of the Word; when the truth is never so apparant, and prooffes never so pregnant, and arguments never so invincible, yet their hearts will not yeeld, nor consent, when the light of the Gospel is plainly dispensed

ſed and promulgated, there muſt needs be a marveilous light, and yet men will not yeeld to it, (as *Paul* and *Barnabas*) the word they taught, the Jewes put it away, when it gripes the heart, and begins to worke effectually, then they vomit it up againe. *Act.* 7. 57. *Yee ſtiff-necked in heart, yee doe alwayes reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt, as your Fathers did, ſo doe yee. Gen.* 19. 9. ſo the Sodomites did to *Lot*, when the old and the young were gathered about the houſe, and would have them out; and when *Lot* ſaid, *I pray you, my brethren, doe not ſo wickedly. Stand back, ſay they, we will doe worſe with thee then with them:* As they did to *Lot*, ſo you doe to Gods Miniſters

Miniſters, when Gods Meſſengers come and intreat you; O brethren, do not ſo wickedly profane the Sabbath, and curſe inſtead of praying; be not ſo malicious againſt the wayes of God, take heed of perſecuting the ſervants of God, *Stand backe, ſay they, we will doe worſe*; and thus they take up armes againſt the bleſſed truth of God, when it comes to pull them off from their curſed practiſes, &c.

For the diſcovery of the point, give me leave to expreſſe three particulars.

Firſt, What is that worke which the truth would diſcover.

Se-

Secondly, How wicked men hinder it.

Thirdly, The reaſon why they doe ſo.

Queſt. 1. What is the power of the truth, or what would it doe that wicked men oppoſe it.

Anſw. It appeares in foure particulars; Firſt, it is a word of Information: that is the firſt worke to diſcover all things to us in their proper colours, *Prov.* 6.23. the Text tels us the Commandement is a Lampe, and the Law is Light, and the reproofes of inſtruction are the way of life; as a Lamp in he night, ſo the way may b e diſcovered: ſo it is with the power of the Word of Truth, and he that hath a minde

minde carefully to attend, may be able to judge, and ſee right from wrong: a man cannot miſcarry ſo long as he is directed by the light of truth: as the Sunne ſhewes all the Moates in the houſe, and the blemiſhes, ſo this is like the Sunne to diſcover and ſhew every moate and blemiſh, and to diſcover every privie and corrupt corner, *Epheſ.* 5.14. All things that are reproved, are made manifeſt by the light: for whatſoever doth make manifeſt, is light: Thou canſt not enquire to doe any thing, but that will adviſe thee.

Secondly, As it is of Information, ſo it is of quickning, a word of power, that not onely telleth the way, but

but enableth us to walke in it; it puts vertue and ability to walke on chearefully.

It is not onely as the Sun to ſhew us the way, but as a ſtreame to carry us in that way God would have us walke, *Luke* 24. 22. there is not a light in the ſhining Sun (*Chriſt*) but is a warning to make nimble our benumbed joynts, 1 *Tim* 6. 3. He cals it the wholeſome word of Truth, whereof Saint *Paul* ſpeakes, *Timothy* was nouriſhed up with. *Pſalme* 119, *I will never forget thy Commandements, becauſe that thereby thou haſt quickned me.*

Thirdly, In the third place it is a coard, though thou be dull, it will plucke thee on; So

So in the fourth place, it is a word of conviction, with power to overthrow all the gaine-ſayings of a man; it meetes with every cavill, it ſtoppes all the baſe trickes and deviſes of our ſinfull mindes. *Luke* 21. 10. when the Diſciples ſhould bee brought before Magiſtrates, ſaith Chriſt, take no care what you ſhall ſpeake, in the 15 *verſe*, For I will give you a mouth and wiſedome, which all your Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gaineſay, nor reſiſt: And in *Acts* 7. the Adverſaries of *Steven* were not able to gaineſay the wiſedome of *Steven*; the Word will convince thy minde, though a cavilling and diſtempered mind, 1 *Cor.* 5.25.

5.25. Better ſpeak one word in a knowne language, then a thouſand in unknowne. And therefore ſaid Saint *Paul*, I was made manifeſt to your conſciences, *Iob* 36. 10. He opens their eare to diſcipline, and commandeth that they returne from iniquitie; though ſtubborne, hee makes them give way to truth.

Fourthly, In the fourth worke of truth there is a ſoveraigne ſupreame authority the word hath, it beares downe all, and carries all, and makes all to yeeld obedience when the Lord pleaſes to accompany it; therefore there is ſuch a power that it is not carnall, but mighty through God to caſt downe ſtrong

ſtrong holds, becauſe hee takes place onely; ſo this is the fourth worke, it carries on a man, and commands the ſoule, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnall*, feeble and weake, *but mighty through God, to the pulling downe of ſtrong holds.* His Commandements are mighty, and what will yee doe when you ſet up ſtrong mountaines of pride, and bulwarkes of reſolutions: when yee are reſolved, yee will have your ſinnes, as drunkenneſſe, covetouſneſſe, &c. though yee periſh for it. So that the truth of God carries the heart and eye, and foot. A mighty operation, The Apoſtle 2 *Cor.* 13. 8. ſaid, *Wee can doe nothing againſt*

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gainſt the truth: ſo that when God will make good his truth, wee can doe nothing againſt Gods truth; Company comes, provocations comes, friends, wife, though life comes, his reſolution ſtands firme, hee ſides with the truth, thus you ſee that truth will worke.

Secondly, for the ſecond particular.

And that is, how a carnall man doth hinder this worke of the Word that it may not prevaile; the ſoule would have the ſinnes, and the word would have the ſoule, now a corrupt heart oppoſes the truth in foure particulars.

Firſt, A carnall heart is marvellous

marvellous unwilling to liſten to the truth of God; ſo as to be informed and inſtructed in thoſe things that would be too tedious: firſt, it is not willing to know what it ſhould doe, leſt it ſhould doe what it would not; therefore it keepes a looſe off: he is a ſtranger to the truth of God; nay, if it be brought home to their doores, and God ſet open his mercies, the truth is, they will not ſo much as take notice of his mercies: To examine every thing, what need a man thus tediouſly trouble himſelfe? thus they hinder the firſt worke of the truth: it is a Schoolemaſter, but they ſtop their eares; Carnall hearts when they ſee it comming

comming towards them, comming to tie them to obedience, if he heares the Word comming, hee ſlides away, he is loth to heare the cauſe, and loth to be perſwaded, he will not be at home on that day, *Eſay* 30.10. The people *ſay to the Seers; ſee not, and to the Prophets, propheſie not right things, ſpeake to us ſmoothe things, propheſie deceits. Get yee out of the way, turne aſide out of the path, cauſe the holy One of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us.* They ſay to the Seers, ſee not, & to the Prophets, propheſy not right things: Doe not ſpeake that they cannot heare, but ſpeak faire and ſmooth things. *Iob* 21.14. *Therefore they ſay unto God, Depart from us, for we deſire*

deſire not the knowledge of thy wayes; The covetous oppreſſors cannot endure to heare of the gringding of the faces of the poore. *Actes* 28.27. *They ſtop their eares, and winke with their eyes, leaſt they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and heare with their eares, and underſtand with their heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heale them.* I beſeech you obſerve it as carnall men that are loth to know the truth: but if they ſearch, they ſeeke after the Word as a Coward doth after his enemy, with a hope he ſhall not finde him, and a feare leſt he ſhould finde him; So a carnall man is loth to finde, and feares to know; and if he doe know and ſearch, hee will

will ſearch no more then ſhall ſerve his turne: hee will not ſuffer truth to have the whole ſway: as a priſoner in chaines, ſo carnall hearts keepe truth in Chaines: and no more then he doth know he would know. *Luke* 4. 42. *And when it was day, hee went into a deſart place, and the people ſought him, and came unto him, and ſtayed him, that he ſhould not depart from them.* Hee made as though hee would goe further, but they ſtayed him by a morrall kinde of perſwaſion; ſo carnall men doe the truth of God, they ſtop and ſtay truth, *Rom.* 12.1,2 *verſes*, Faſhion not your ſelves after the world; and in the Law, Ye ſhall not take the name

name of an idoll in your mouth: The meaning is, ye ſhould not give honour to them; but truth goes further; Shall I once name an Idoll in my mouth, much leſſe ſet up an Idoll in Gods ſervice? Is not this much more? but ſtay you there, ſaith the carnall heart, as it is with an old man that lyeth upon his ſicke-bed, when his eyes are failing him, hee cannot looke on the Sunne, when it ſhines in his face; and therefore he deſires them to draw the curtaine, for ſayes he the Sunne ſhines too full in my face; give me a little light: hold you there, a weake ſight, and a weake light: ſo when the Word comes to one that would not part with

ſinne, if it come to ſhine full in his face, and to pull down his proud heart, and to deprive him of libertie; Oh ſaith he, Draw the Curtaine for the Sunne ſhines too full in my face; but ſo much as ſerves the turne, Chriſt and libertie, Chriſt and the world; oh hold you there, ſaith he. *Deut.* 12. 31. Ye ſhall not worſhip God as Heathens doe, but as Chriſtians; Oh draw the Curtaine, &c. and if thy neighbour offer thee more for a commodity then it is worth, thou ſhouldeſt not take it; Oh draw the Curtaine, the Sunne ſhines too full in my face, ſaith he; You muſt not put off your Ware with lying, Oh draw the Curtaine, &c.

and

and ſo of drunkenneſſe, &c. Briefely I conceive you doe in ſome meaſure know how that they hinder the worke of the light of the truth; ſaith *Ieremy*, I hearkned & heard, if any laid their hands on their thigh, and ſaid, What have I done? Oh brethren, the truth of God comes to your doores, and hearkens whether any of you lay your hand on your thigh, and ſay, What have I done?

Secondly, whereby they hinder and hold down truth. A carnall heart labours to oppoſe this, & the powerfull effication of this, and that it doth thus: A carnall heart raiſes up an evill report on the good truth of God, that it might appear ugly to them

that ſhould lay hold of it. The Spies when they went into *Canaan*, they did not ſo much conſider the plenty of the land, to perſwade the people to come, but raiſed up lies, there is ſtrong holds, and Iron Chariots, and mighty men, to dampe their hearts: ſo it is with a carnall heart; the Saints reprove, and Miniſters preach, every one comes to reprove him, and yet he is not perſwaded, &c. *Iohn 6.6.* There was many that followed Chriſt for loaves, but when Chriſt pitched upon matter of exactneſſe, ſay they, it is a hard ſaying. Carnall hearts when Chriſt is commended, all pleaſantneſſe, nothing but beauty, full of comfort, and hap-

happy are they that can get him: Grace here, and glory hereafter, Oh ſay they, it is a hard ſaying, they preſent him onely crucified, contemned, and mocked; thus they labour onely to hinder it: Take notice and ſee the grounds why they profit ſo little, it is becauſe the worke of the Word is hindered by the buſineſſe of our hearts; we deale ill with the bleſſed truth of God: it is with the Truth, as with a Trade; ſome are borne to great eſtates, and they are able to follow it, yet their eſtate it may bee decayes; what is the reaſon? they have been wonderfully hindered by many oppreſſions, and cruell dealings at ſome Vſurers hand; juſt ſo

it is with the truth of God: you have had good meanes, Oh you have oppreſſed the Word of God, and would not open; if any would open, he would come in, but yee have quenched the motions of Gods Spirit.

Object. Is it in our power to make the Word effectuall?

Anſw. No, but it is in your power to doe what you are able to doe; your leggs may as well carry you to the Word, as to an Alehouſe; your eares may heare the Word as well as ſongs; you may reade good Bookes, as well as Play Bookes. Doe you what you are able to do, and cry to God, and ſee what he will doe; though you are not

not able to ſave your ſelves, yet your corruptions are able to hinder the Word; and this is the reaſon why the Word prevailes not with you, the Lord may give what he will, and deny what he will, but deſtruction is from thy ſelfe, thou haſt free will to ſinne: learne from hence to ſee the reaſon and cauſe where the fault lies. *Luke 7. 29. The Publicanes juſtified God, being baptiſed with the baptiſme of Iohn: But the Phariſees and Lawyers rejected the Counſell of God againſt themſelves:* the way of life was chalked out before them: but the Scribes and Phariſees rejected the good counſell of God; thou ſeeſt many are called, Oh blame thy ſelfe.

Where am I? all this while the Word would enlighten, but I have contemned it; the Word would quicken, but I have neglected it; I was almoſt converted, but oh wretch that I was, company came, and I choked it, and would not walke in the way of God: and the Lord hath often come to me, by the Spirit, and I have quenched the good motions of the ſame. Brethren it is true; Oh blame your ſelves: goe home, and ſay, why may not my heart be made cleane, the Lord wrought on ſuch a one, and why not on me?

Thirdly, A carnall heart doth oppoſe the good Word of God, by reſiſting the work of conviction, if a man be ſo that

that he cannot but ſay, that he is in a good way: he cannot gain-ſay the power of the truth, if it be ſo with him, then he labours with all carnall cavils, as much as in him lies to defeat the truth of God; Oh that convicting! Oh that powerfull Word, the Word of the Lord commeth like a ſword, the Lord ſeemes to aime at a ſinner, that he ſaith it is my ſinne that is now diſcovered: Brethren, all the ſhift they have is to put by the power of the truth: As a man that is beſet by an enemy, labours to keepe off the blow, leſt he ſhould be ſlaine; ſo a carnall man labours to ſtop the evidence of Word, that it might

vaile againſt his ſoule, though it ſeeth the truth: it is not ſatisfied therewith, *Numb.* 22. As when *Balack* ſent to *Baalam*, to curſe the people, thinking him to be a Witch: therefore whom he bleſſed, was bleſſed, and whom hee curſed was curſed; God ſaith to *Balaam*, thou ſhalt not goe with them; yet when they returned this anſwer to *Balack*, and that *Balack* ſent more honourable men then they, and tels him hee will promote him: Marke the poore ſinfull covetous wretch, the ſinfull man ſaith, ſtay all night, and I will ſee what the Lord will ſay, hee would faine have the Lord change his minde; Why did he bid him ſtay. The Lord ſaith

ſaith in the Text going before, *Thou ſhalt not goe with them*: I but his affections were lingring after the houſfull of gold, therefore hee would have God change his minde. So there is many a carnall heart followeth the wages of *Baalam*, as Saint *Iude* ſpeaketh, hearing the Word; certainly, ſaith hee, this truth I will follow; but when riches and honours come, then he will ſearch the Word, to ſee for a Diſpenſation; this is a carnall ſtopping of the truth of God, he will ſearch all the wayes, and try all the concluſions he can, whereby he may cavill againſt the truth; this is not the meaning of the Text, however a man may cauſe labour

labour to a weake Chriſtian: but marke thine owne heart, if it be ſo, I ſhall be vexed therewith: therefore I will have ſome cavill; I will not embrace this courſe; therefore I will invent a way that it may not be lawfull to me. When Saint *Paul* diſputed with the *Athenians*, divers of them encountred with *Paul*; they had Argument for Argument againſt him, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was not the Saviour of the world; This is the generall courſe of a carnall heart, if it may deviſe a courſe againſt it, hee is contented; if ſo be there can be no prevailing againſt it, it ſends farre and neere and gathereth Towne and Countrey to ſeeke it; as an Vſurer

Vſurer that is reſolved to continue in it, hee goes to fourty Miniſters about it; and if hee bee told of the ſinne of it, hee will ſay hee will thinke of it; hee will ſearch the devils Skull, but he will invent ſome carnall Argument; hee conferred with ſuch a man, and he told him ſuch reaſons, but they blew away as a blaſt of wind. Marke my Brethren, the Lord ſent *Moſes* to convince *Pharaoh*, and when *Pharaoh* ſaid, *I will not let the people goe*, God ſaith, *Lay downe thy rod, and it ſhall bee turned into a Serpent:* what doth *Pharaoh* then? hee doth not ſit downe under the miracle, but ſends for Magicians, and they caſt downe

rodds,

roddes, and they were turned into Serpents alſo: but *Moſes* his rod devoured theirs; yet *Pharaoh* hardened his heart. So when the Word comes home, this Word I muſt yeeld to, this Truth I muſt entertaine, and when the Word commeth by a mighty power, they ſend for Magicians, carnall Arguments, though the Arguments out of the Word doth eat up all, yet a carnall heart doth goe away ſatisfied, and it ſhall be ſo.

Fourthly, and laſtly, if by carnall reaſon they cannot defeat the truth, they fall to flat reſiſting, they will have their way; and ſo Brethren, they lay violent hands upon the truth, 1 *Sam.* 8. 18. The people

people were ſet a madding upon a King, they would have a King as all other Nations had; they thought that to be a meanes of their proſperity, that would be a cauſe of their deſtruction. *Samuel* makes a gracious Sermon to them, that they might be diſſwaded: when he had diſcovered all ſaving Arguments, they doe not reply a word reaſoning; nay ſay they, but we will have a King, they are reſolved of it, as a wretched man ſaid, (when one complained hee could not doe ſuch a thing for his conſcience) I am maſter of my conſcience, I can doe what I will for all that. *Numb.* 24. 1,2. *When Balaam ſaw that the Lord did not give him leave,*

leave, it did not pleaſe him, he went not as at other times, but ſet his face towards the Wilderneſſe, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. It was his deviſe before hee would curſe the Lords people, he made ſeven Altars, and ſeven Altars before to aske God, but now hee would put it to adventure, he would curſe what ever came of it; and thus it is with a carnall man, when he ſees that all his carnall Arguments fall, he ſaith, I will not pray in my Family, &c. Know thou that caſteſt away the command of God here, hereafter the Lords command with a curſe ſhall prevaile againſt thee; ſay hereafter I will not goe to Hell, the

the Lord ſaith, *Matth.* 25. 46. *Theſe ſhall goe into perdition, &c.*

Reaſ. 1. The firſt ground of the point, why carnall men doe ſo, is namely, they cannot endure to have their ſinnes removed, therefore of neceſſity, the bleſſed Word muſt be reſiſted, every ſinner loveth his ſinne, therefore ye ſhall obſerve when a man ſpeaketh againſt drunkennes & pride, &c. he ſaith, he met with me, he ſpeaks againſt my ſinnes, why he ſpoke againſt ſin, againſt drunkenneſſe, Sabboth breaking, &c. Nay, he ſpeakes againſt my perſon; ſinne is as neere as the ſoule, will not any man ſtrive for his life? I beſeech you obſerve it; his ſinne is his life, there-

therefore when the Word of the Lord would plucke the cup from the drunkard, the Whore from the adulterer, he plucks his life; every thing ſeekes to preſerve his life, and will not ſin doe ſo too, to contend for his life, ſo ſinne ſeeks to preſerve it's life; If that the Miniſters prevaile, you and I muſt part, therefore doe all you can to ſtop it, the reaſon is, becauſe a mans ſinne, is a mans ſoule. Here is the very ground, as it was in that remarkeable paſſage of *Herod*, touching his brothers wife, hee reformed many things, but when *Iohn* ſaid, *It is not lawfull for thee to have her*, when he muſt either kill or be killed; *Herodias*

dias muſt downe, or *Iohn*: he loſes his Harlot, therefore he would part with all. If the Miniſter meet with a man, though he never knew him, the Word meets with him, his heart then riſes, and either he muſt be gone, or the Miniſter gone. Why Brethren, what doe you doe? it is your ſinne we oppoſe, a day will come, when yee ſhall be content to part with them, oh the time will come when yee ſhall be content to be rid of your money, the drunkard would faine be rid of his cups, and the adulterer of his Harlot; No, then theſe will goe downe to hell with you, you cannot abide them that would kill that which would kill you: the faith-

faithfull Miniſters of God would kill your ſinnes, that to a corrupt heart is his life.

Reaſ. 2. If they cannot have their ſins, it is a vexation to them; it is a plague & vexation to wicked men, that they cannot have their ſinnes in quiet, and ſo as they would not be moved, they would not have their conſciences troubled; but if a man would have his ſinne and curſed practiſe, hee ſhall have the curſe of the Lord to goe with it. *Revel.* 11. *verſ.* 10. When the two witneſſes were ſlaine, they made merry in Towne and Countrey. Why? becauſe the two witneſſes that tormented men, were ſlaine, the Word of God tormented men, it is a-

ble

ble to make them madde: why alas, you naturall men damne your ſelves, we doe not damne you, but we tell you of your ſinnes that will damne you one day.

Thirdly, Note Brethren, that for ever you cannot have theſe ſinnes, but they will coſt you ſore; for theſe men cannot endure to bee croſſed and overthwarted, they would goe on ſmoothly in their courſe. *Acts* 19. 25. *Paul* had there preached againſt Idolatry, &c. eſpecially againſt *Diana*: *Demetrius* beginning to ſee his commodity going down; marke what he ſaith, You know that by this we have our livings, therefore they came with a great out-

cry

cry, *Great is Diana of, &c.* There is ſome ſpeciall corruption, that is a ſpeciall hinderance of the truth, a company of carnall men ſpeake of the Word; at whoſe ſuite? it is the ſuite of Drunkennes, & uncleanneſſe, &c. So it carries a man againſt the bleſſed truth of Chriſt, a corrupt heart cannot indure to be brought in.

Vſe 1. Is of examination, is it ſo that corrupt hearts doe hinder the worke of the Word of the Lord? heere thē we have a ground of examination. It is an undoubted evidence of a carnall and an unrighteous heart, and there is not a better argument: art thou ſuch a one that doeſt oppoſe the truth of God, according

according to the former expreſſion: Know thou haſt a falſe heart, a wretched heart, a ſoule that cannot be ſaved while thou continueſt ſo; I know in a child of God there is ſometimes a ſecret reſiſting, and when ever they obſerve this baſe diſtemper, they fall out with their hearts, they take up armes againſt theſe baſe corruptions; it is one thing to have theſe ſinnes remaining, and another to have the ſoule poyſoned with them. When a wicked man hath poyſon, & lives on poyſon, carrying a ſecret oppoſition againſt the word, it is an Argument, hee hath a poyſoned baſe heart.

The beſt of Gods ſervants

vants may finde theſe, the Devill, the fleſh and the world having about with them; in this caſe thou maiſt be carried whither thou wouldeſt not: Oh it is a heart-breaking to a godly man, he could almoſt pul out his heart, ſaying, Oh what a wretched heart have I? The Miniſter this day met with my ſoule, but what a heart have I? Here my Brethren, let this enter into our minde; the caſe is true, take it home to every ſoule, goe aſide to your owne ſoules, commune with thy conſcience in ſecret, ſay there's no body here betwixt God and my ſelfe; deale truely, haſt thou oppoſed the good Word of the Lord? Oh you rent in pieces

ces the fleſh of Chriſt, with the prophanations, oathes, curſings; yea, the very walls of your houſes cry ſhame on you for it, and yet to this very day you will not be reformed. You ſee what it is. I beſeech you, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſts ſake, reſolve againſt it.

The former truth it ſpecially meeteth with three ſorts of falſe hearts.

1 Diſcreet hypocrites.
2 Wrangling hypocrites.
3 Whyning hypocrites.

This diſcovereth that all theſe doe fight againſt God.

Firſt, the diſcreet hypocrite, I know that diſcretion is a good and bleſſed worke

of God, if it be uſed as it ought to be upon good ground in a good manner, and to a good end: but that ſame Idoll, Diſcretion that creepeth in the world, is the deluſion of a mans conſcience; therefore I call him a diſcreet hypocrite indeed, that maketh truth his underling, that can hunt with the Hound, and runne with the Hare: by Diſcretion a man that will be ſure to be on the ſafe ſide, whether on the true ſide or not; he wonders at other men to ſee them oppoſed, becauſe they want his diſcretion. There are a company of wiſe judicious profeſſors that periſh wiſely, as *Demas* followed *Paul*; but when he ſaw he might get better

better advantage, he forſooke *Paul* and followed the preſent world. This diſcreete hypocrite letteth profeſſion goe as the time goeth: they will take occaſion of wholeſome communi cation, and offer occaſion; I ſay hee can conforme himſelfe to all times: but then againe if hee be among carnall prophane men, this is a man ſafe that letteth out Religion, and pulleth in Religion, as the time is; in a word you ſhall finde him to admire at mens perſons, and yet keepes under the word. This I call a diſcreet hypocrite that goes to hell wiſely: theſe diſcreet hypocrites have their religion as in a ſcrew, at any ſide they will ſet Religion, and

upon any termes, after any faſhion: this is the diſcreet Profeſſor.

Secondly, the wrangling hypocrite he pretends nothing but favourableneſſe all love and liking; nay, hee makes Religion his ayme, to ſcope the end of his courſe, he doth not ſay any thing againſt the truth: yet he is a ſecret underminer of Truth: to ſhew you the playes: this ſame hypocrite hath one, that we will make it appeare he is a groſſe hypocrite.

Hee pleadeth eſpecially againſt the common truth; that he deſires firſt, to know the will of God, and how God may be glorified; he ſeekes not eaſe or quietneſſe,

neſſe, but he pretends hee ſeekes the liberty of the Goſpel, but he ſeekes his owne liberty, the liberty of his ſtate: As *Saul* when God gave him a Commiſſion to kill all the Amalekites; when *Samuel* commeth, What ſaith he? *Bleſſed art thou of the Lord*; If a man take *Sauls* owne word, *Saul* is an honeſt man; I but ſaith *Samuel*; *What meanes then the bleating of theſe ſheepe and oxen in mine eares?* he ſaith, the people did it; I but thou art the Governour.

They were good for ſacrifice, ſaith he. Alaſſe, did he love ſacrifice ſo well? no, it was for his owne ends: ſo many a man pretendeth much ſanctification and exactneſſe

of a Chriſtian Courſe, Faith and new obedience, not becauſe he loves God, but his owne end. But a man ſhould be zealous in ſanctification, to the utmoſt, even to a hoofe as *Moſes*.

Againe, you ſhall find him to pretend marvellous humility. He is content to bee ſubject to God in every caſe; but marke, he ſubmitteth to theſe courſes.

The laſt plea hee hath, Good men doe as I doe; aske any reaſon, propound any argument what mooves him; none at all, hee brings the truth in ſubjection to himſelfe and the falſeneſſe of his heart, is marvellous plain, and is in the ſtate of unregeneracie

I reaſon thus: He that is not content to part with all for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is not worthy of Chriſt, *Hee that loves father or mother more then me, is not worthy of me,* ſaith Chriſt; to this very day, he never had the ſpirit of grace prevaile in him. *Pſal.* 119. *David* ſayes, *I ſhall never be aſhamed nor confounded, when I have reſpect to all thy Commandements.* Now this wrangling hypocrite hath not reſpect to all Gods Commandements, therefore ſhall hee be confounded.

Thirdly, Hee that under pretence of whyning and crying for ſinne, loveth ſinne: this man oppreſſeth himſelfe; for under pre-

tence of love, hee oppoſeth and reſiſteth the truth.

2 *Vſe.* The laſt uſe is a ground of admirable comfort; it may relliſh in your hearts and mouthes; it is unſpeakeable comfort to every ſoule, whoſe heart lyeth levell; doeſt thou ſubmit to the powerfull Word of the Lord; to the bleſſed truth? art thou willing to have it, to know it, to delight in it, and ſubmit unto it, to be a ſervant to the world? carry home this bleſſed Word, is there any ſoule that can teſtifie it is ſo with him? If I miſtake not my ſelfe, it is one of the ſoundeſt Arguments in all the Booke of God; it muſt be love that is anſwerable to the truth; when

when the ſoule is willing to heare, to welcome and entertaine every truth of God, canſt thou ſay in good earneſt and uprightneſſe before the Lord, is there any more truthes, and more good will of thine, *of thy worſhip?* good Lord let me know it, that I may love it, and practice it. Brethren is it ſo, take then this *in you*, and anſwer, it is ſo Lord. Brethren, if there be a ſight of God in heaven, and thou doeſt truely ſubmit to the word, it is a true ſigne, that if any under heaven hath the worke of grace wrought in him, thou haſt it. *Iohn* 8. *If any man love the truth and obey the Commandements, the truth will make him free.* Doſt thou then love

and obey the truth, it will make thee free, it will make thee a freeman of heaven; hold this truth, *Heaven and earth ſhall paſſe, but that work of grace cannot paſſe.* This was the joy of the Apoſtle: *Iohn* 5. 4. *I have no greater joy in the world, then that my children walke in the truth:* in the light, comfort, and power of it. If the Apoſtle *Iohn* could have no greater truth, what great joy will it be to thy ſelfe? no greater joy have I, ſaith ſome man, not that my ſonne is rich, but that he is upright. How mayeſt thou joy then, if ever thou ſee the face of God with comfort, try if thou beeſt upright, if thou loveſt the truth, the Saints

can

can ſee no greater joy then this: Oh goe your wayes you bleſſed Saints, ye walke after the truth, you that have this, can have no more: God himſelfe loveth truth in the inward parts; hee is a ſpirit, and will be worſhipped in ſpirit and truth. Doſt thou love the truth of Chriſt? then it will ſay as well of thee as of *Demetrius*, *Iohn* 3.12. *Demetrius hath a good report of the truth:* So I ſay, doth the truth report well of thee? Doe not feare what the world, thy friends, enemies or adverſaries ſay of thee, that will bring thee comfort, when all falſe witneſſes ſhall lye aſide: but all you wicked of the world, you are they that bend your

ſelves

ſelves againſt the Saints of God. It is true, the poore Saints of God, as poore as they be, they ſhall lift up their heads, when you ſhall hang downe and turne aſide; becauſe they have the truth for them, when you ſhall ſee the poore diſpiſed Saints of God, poore Goodman ſuch a one, &c. You that have made no care of Gods Commandements, when yee ſhall ſee them, ye ſhall wonder to ſee them lift up thither; when the Divell ſhall ſay, Lord, how comes ſuch a man to ſuch a place? he was a ſinner; I Lord (ſaith the poore ſoule) I know I have many weakneſſes: Lord thou knoweſt that many a ſad ſpirit I have carried

about,

about, yet never a truth was made knowne, but I entertained it; never a ſinne was made knowne, but I entertained it; never a ſinne was made known, but I loathed it; then comes the bleſſed Truth, I beare witneſſe Lord, he loved me, and entertained mee, though with many groanes, and teares, and perſecutions; hee would have me, ſaith the truth, hee is a bleſſed Saint of God. You that are willing to receive every truth, oh get you to heaven, then you will be paſt the worſt, the Devill himſelfe confeſſes, and the damned ſpirits: He is a holy and ſincere hearted man; Why Brethren who would not labour for the truth: I ſay God,

God, and Chriſt, and the good ſpirit ſhall embrace ſuch a ſoule; God is a God of truth, Jeſus Chriſt is the Word of truth, the Holy Ghoſt is a ſpirit of truth; they will embrace thee; God and Chriſt, and the Spirit all bids you come, and ſo you ſhall have true happineſſe; the Lord bring you to it, and you ſhall finde it hereafter.

FINIS.

A GODLY AND PROFITABLE SERMON:

Of Gods Eternitie and Mans Humanitie.

OR,

The ſtriving of the Lord with Sinners.

By *T. H.*

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THE STRIVING of the LORD with SINNERS.

GEN. 6.3.

My Spirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with man for that he alſo is fleſh, yet his dayes ſhall be an hundred and twenty yeares.

1 THe ſcope of this Chapter diſcovers it ſelfe in two parts; firſt the divers conditions of them before the Floud. Secondly, the carriage

age of God towards them in the ſecond part of the Chapter. Firſt the carriage of the people is double; firſt their wicked and ſinfull lives from the firſt verſe to the end of the ſeventh.

Secondly, the holy demeanor of *Noah*, in the 8, and 9 verſes, *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, Noah was a juſt man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God: Noah* in that wicked time, in that wicked place, and among thoſe wicked people, was a holy man, ſaith the Text.

Secondly, we have the divers dealing of God with them.

Firſt, he threatens deſolation to the wicked; ſecondly,

condly, he promiſes to preſerve *Noah*; and for the guiſe of the wicked:

Firſt, conſider the hainouſneſſe of their ſinnes, that they broke all the Lawes of God, and luſt was their Law: in the firſt and ſecond verſes, the Text ſayes; *When men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters was borne unto them, that the ſonnes of God ſaw the daughters of men, that they were faire and lookt for wives of all that they choſe.*

The ſonnes of God, the meaning of that is, they that profeſſed the truth. Secondly, they ſaw the daughters of men, they ſaw *Caine*, and they that were of God did what

what they liſt, and choſe a croſſe way, and ſo came ſtrange generations, as Giants, they were growne to the height of ſinne.

Secondly, in the 3, 6, and 7 verſes, is the ſentence of God againſt them; hee ſees they come to this, and then ſets downe a ſentence of doombe (as it were) he ſayes, *My Spirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with man, in that hee is but fleſh; yet his dayes ſhall be an hundred and twenty yeares:* The Lord will ſtrive no longer with them; from whence by the way we may note.

Object. That when there is a mingling of diuers marriages, it makes way to deſtruction, prooved in *Solomon,*

mon, when hee tooke him ſtrange wives: then his Crowne was taken from him; ſo this old World when they gave themſelves to ſtrange marriages.

Firſt, In the ſentence there are two things: firſt, the Lords reſolution: ſecondly, the reaſon of Gods determination.

Firſt, the reſolution, and that is firſt generally, hee hath ſtrove, but will ſtrive no more.

Secondly, particularly he will not ſtrive, and will ſtrive an hundred and twenty yeares; here is the reſolution of God, though he ſtrive, yet hee will not ſtrive alwayes.

Secondly, the reaſon of Gods

Gods determination; hee is alſo fleſh.

In the Text two things are to be obſerved.

Firſt, what is meant by ſpirit; ſecondly, what it is to ſtrive: firſt Gods Spirit we may underſtand to be the holy Ghoſt, the third perſon in Trinity: hee is ſaid to ſtrive, not miraculouſly, but mediately by his meanes, the Word of God, Miniſters; he is ſaid to ſtrive with this generation by the Miniſtery of the Word, and *Noah* and *Enock* in that Miniſtery. Gods Spirit ſtrives with wicked men, they ſpake not in their owne words, but in the 2 *Pet.* 2. holy men ſpake Gods Word as they doe; the Lord doth put his hand to the

the worke: the meaning is, I have ſent *Noah* and *Enock*, they ſpake not their owne words onely, but yee have ſtriven againſt my good Spirit: what it is to ſtrive: the Lord will not ſtrive alwayes, the meaning is not, in judgement, *Eccleſ. 6. 10.* The Lord he deales with poore ſinners after their nature, as a reaſonable creature, he enters to reaſons, and goes to Law, and makes ſuite to draw them home to him; for this I take to be the meaning, his Miniſters came ſometimes to exhort, ſometimes to comfort, and ſometimes to reprove, and ſo wee goe to Law with God againe.

From

From whence obſerve foure points.

Doct. 1. The Spirit of God doth ever accompany the Word, and the Miniſters thereof. Here he aſcribes it, *My ſpirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive.*

Doct. 2. That the Lord ſtrives with rebellious ſinners, for their good, when as they ſtrive againſt the power of the Spirit, and their owne good. *Noah* ſtrove to draw them home, and they ſtrove and would not come.

Doct. 3. When men doe abuſe the Word long, God will ceaſe to ſtrive in the uſe of the meanes; he will ſtrive no more, as he ſaid here, *And the*

the Lord ſaid, I will not alwayes,&c.

Doct. 4. Though the Lord will ſtrive no more, yet he ſtrives long, hee gives long time of repentance, as he did to the old world an hundred and twenty yeares.

Doct. 5. That Gods Spirit doth ever accompany the Word, and the Miniſtery thereof: by the Spirit of God, I meane the eternall Spirit, the Holy Ghoſt, doth in ſpeciall manner accompany the Word; know that God is every where, and knoweth all things; but in a ſpeciall manner hee is with this; with the Word, Come, he comes, & with the Word, forbid, he forbids; *Rom.* 1. the Goſpel is the power of

the Lord to the ſalvation of man.

Queſt. But how doth this appeare to be ſo?

Anſw. I anſwer, it appeareth in two things, firſt God doth pleaſe to ſet this worke apart, to ſave and ſanctifie our ſoules, which all the learning in the world cannot doe.

Secondly, the Lord by the power of his Spirit, doth conſtantly, and continually accompany this worke, as he thinkes good, to be a confutation to the wicked, and a conſolation to the godly, 2 *Cor.* 2. the two laſt verſes, to the one it is a ſavour of death, to the other it is a ſavour of life; it either kills the ſoule, or ſaves the ſoule; though

though it ever accompanies the Word, yet this worke of the Spirit is a voluntary worke.

Thirdly, It doth alwayes acompany the Word, but doth not alwayes worke; for ſome after twenty or thirty yeares are converted; ſo that it doth not alwayes worke: Looke as the brazen Serpent was lift up in the Wilderneſſe, that whoever looked on it, that was ſtung with the fiery Serpents, ſhould be healed: there was a healing vertue in it, he ſet it a part for that purpoſe, for that had no vertue of it ſelfe, but becauſe God would worke by it, ſo that whoſoever looked on it might bee healed: ſo it is with the

Word of God, for they are no more able to convert then others, but becauſe God hath promiſed to accompany them in diſpenſation of it.

Reaſ. 1. Firſt, taken from the fruit and effect of his Word, that it is able to doe all things; in the beginning it is able to doe that which Men and Angels cannot doe. *Hebr.* 4. 12. *The Word of God is quicke and powerfull, and ſharper then any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of the ſoule and ſpirit, and a diſcovery of the thoughts of the heart.* It is Gods faithfull worke: the reaſon why carnall men fall out with the Miniſters of the Word, and ſay you ſpeak againſt men, I know you meane

meane me. No, no, wee know not your hearts, but God doth, and the Word of God knowes them, *Iohn* 5. *The dead ſhall heare the voyce of the Sonne of God*; the meaning is, they that are dead in ſinnes, for by nature every man is dead in ſinne. It muſt be more then all men can do, as our Saviour ſaid to *Lazarus*, when men ſtood weeping by, but Chriſt ſaid, *Lazarus come out*. It muſt be Gods Word that muſt raiſe us from the death of ſinne to the life of righteouſneſſe.

Vſe. Firſt, of inſtruction to take heed of taking up of Armes againſt the Spirit of God, we ſee the haynous ſinne of them that deſpiſe

the Miniſtery of the Goſpell, men may thinke it nothing: but alas you know not what it is, for the Word of God and the Spirit of God goeth together; as the bleſſed Martyr *Steven* ſaid in the 7 of the *Actes*, *Yee ſtiffenecked and uncircumciſed in heart and eares, you have ever reſiſted the good Spirit of God; as did your Fathers, ſo do you:* therefore take heed, You are neere to the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, for it is not the Word of Man, but the Word of God; it is the Spirit that thou ſhouldeſt be ſaved by, that thou haſt oppoſed; you goe away with the contempt of the Goſpel, and make that nothing; thou haſt ſinned againſt

against God, and his Spirit that accompanies the Word; Counsel one another, say, do you know what you do? It is Gods Spirit, must not that comfort you, must not that save you? It is that that you oppose; take heed, for this is above Incestuous sinnes. *Luke* 3.20.21. *Herod* was an Incestuous sinner, but above all his sins, he added this, that he put *Iohn* in prison; he was a incestuous adulterer, yet putting *Iohn* in prison, was above all. *Matth.* 11. *It shall be easier for Sodome and Gomorrah in the day of judgement, then for you that oppose the Word of the Lord.* So much for the first point.

Doct. 2. The Lord strives with poore sinners for their

good; when as they ſtrive againſt the power of the Spirit, and their owne good; God enters into Law with a ſinner; Sin and Sathan ſaith the ſoul is theirs; God enters into Law, and ſaith it is his, and he made it; every man by nature takes paine that he might have no good from God; he goes to Law, to goe to hell; as it were. *Matth.* 23. 37. *Oh Ieruſalem, thou that killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt them that were ſent to thee.* There is the thing, marke; *How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a Henne her Chickens, and yee would not?* Here is a contention, the Lord would have revealed his will, & his Spirit, would have called

led you home, but you would not; yee reſiſted his good Spirit, yee take hold of wickedneſſe, as the Prophet here ſayes; and *Iohn* 5. 4. *You will not come to me, that you may be ſaved*, ſaith our Saviour to the Phariſees; many periſh, and ſhal periſh; the reaſon is, yee will not come to Chriſt for life. The wicked ſay, *Pſal.* 2. *Let us breake their bonds aſunder, and caſt their cords from us.* Gods commands are cords and bonds to draw them, but you breake over hedge and ditch, and will walke in your owne wayes, *Acts* 18. the 5, 6 verſes *Paul* accompanied *Silas* and *Timotheus*, diſputed with the *Iewes*, hee profeſſed *Ieſus*

was the very *Chriſt*; the Text ſaith, they oppoſed the words of *Paul*, though he was for their good; this is the teſtimony of him, that whoſoever will come to *Chriſt*, may come: but they came in defiance and bataile array againſt *Chriſt*, and the power of the Goſpell. Thus you ſee God ſtrives with poore ſinners for their good, and they ſtrive againſt the power of the Spirit, and their owne good. To open the point,

Firſt, how God ſtrives with poore ſinners for their good, and goes to Law, and pleads and beſtowes paines, that he might doe them good: the reaſon why hee doeth ſo.

Queſt.

Quest. First, how doth God strive with poore sinners, and pleads for their good?

Answ. This pleading of God discovers it selfe in two heads. First, by manner of perswasion: Secondly, by way of constraint.

First, by manner of perswasion, to perswade them from sinne.

Secondly, by way of constraint, to compell them to come in. And first he strives by way of perswasion, wherin he discovers the matter, and then he brings an execution.

In this perswasion God hath foure things: namely,

First, Hee makes knowne what sinne is, and that by sum-

ſummoning them to the Court, as men that goe to Law, they ſummon one another to be at ſuch a Court: ſo God ſummons them when they are ignorant of that which ſhould doe them good, and know not in what an eſtate they are in, then he brings them to the Word, and diſcovers it, as in *Eſay*, *I was found of them, ſaith the Lord, that ſought me not*: but if a ſoule grow ſtill careleſſe, the Lord will not leave the ſinner, but makes him to conſider what ſinne is, and know it. *Ezek.* 16. 2. *verſe. Sonne of man, cauſe the children of Iſrael to know their abominations*: Goe home to their dores & tell them home, you know you ſhould heare the

Word

Word conſtantly, and pray conſtantly, and know what you ſhould doe, and this makes wicked covetous men at their deaths, as it were, at their wits end. Wee know a man that goes to Law, layes an Action againſt the other, and then ſerves a *Subpæna* on him; ſo the Lord layes an Action againſt the ſinner, and ſerves a *Subpæna* on him; thou art the man, and thou ſhalt periſh, when hee doth this, then hee pleades the Cauſe, as a man that wreſtles; hee firſt catches hold, and then comes in to him, that haply hee might throw him: ſo God catches hold when hee meanes to wreſtle with a ſinner, that his eyes are ever on his ſinne

and

and ſayes, I am the man.

Secondly, When a ſinner is thus ſummoned, and ſees the Cauſe goes againſt him, then hee labours and invents how to anſwer for himſelfe; the ſinner is grown to a ſtand, as in the Court ſo brought, when hee ſees the caſe to goe againſt him, becauſe he knowes not what to doe; hegoes to the Lawyers, though his caſe be not good, he will ſpend ſo much and ſo much; conſider how it is when the conſcience is enlightned, and ſayes, I am the man; then what courſe doe they take? they invent all carnall pleaſures to pull backe the Word; looke what *Pharaoh* did when God ſent *Moſes* to trouble him, hee ſent

sent for the wise Magicians to know whether it were God or no; so he contemned *Moses* and the miracle: so it is when God enlightens the mind; what doe carnall men then? they send for the Magicians, pleasures to beat the Word backe.

Quest. I say they, I am a sinner, and every one is a sinner, and did not Christ die to save sinners?

Answ. The truth is, Christ came to save sinners, and not to save them onely, but to sanctifie them. True sayes the sinner, I wil amend, I am not so precise as others; these are the wranglings of carnall reasons; God comes nearer, he sayes you must purifie your selves as he is pure,

pure, *Iohn* 1. 3. It is not enough to be a meere civill man, but yee muſt purifie your ſelves, as he is pure. If you will ſee God to your comfort, though Sathan take a Lawyers place, and carnall reaſon an Atturnies, and what ever Sathan and carnall Reaſon can doe, they will doe on every ſeaſon: at laſt God ſends the Comforter from heaven, to comfort them, *Iohn* 16. 8. And when he is come, hee will convince the world of righteouſneſſe, of judgement, and of ſinne; when Gods Spirit comes by the Word, it ſets apart all carnall reaſon, that there is no more ſhifting: you thinke you may contend againſt your Brethren, and goe to hea-

heaven, but this cannot be, for the good ſpirit ſets all carnall reaſons apart; it makes him to ſay, if I forſake not every ſinne, I forſake none; for he that forſakes not every ſin he forſake none. Doth any man thinke to bee a Chriſtian, and a ſwearer, a Chriſtian and a drunkard; why a heathen can doe this: well, ſuch will deceive themſelves, that can ſay, well I hope God is more mercifull then the Miniſters and proud Profeſſors: No, no, know that if the Spirit come, it ſets a part all carnall reaſons; God layes the Action before, the ſinner is now caſt, he ſees there is but one way, live in ſinne, and go to hell: thus when a ſoule can yeeld

to

to Gods Word, that he may not be caſt downe. In the third place marke;

Thirdly, God tels him, that howſoever hee bee caſt, yet he will be mercifull abundantly to him; hee ſhewes him his eſtate; yet ſaith he, thou art in the land of the living, thou art yet under the meanes, as a party caſt in the Court in a ſumme of all that hee hath; the other gives him time to pay it; there is ſome comfort yet, it may be he may get ſomthing in that time by the helpes of his friends. *Rom.* 2. 4. The Apoſtle ſaith, *Deſpiſeſt thou the goodnes of God, that ſhould lead thee to repentance*; as if he had ſaid, Conſider the goodneſſe of the Lord, and ſay,

say, Lord, I am not yet in hell, and doe I live to another Sermon? thou wert mercifull to *Manasses*, and to others, thou mayest bee mercifull to me (Lord:) why here is great comfort; but when a soule sees Gods goodnesse in health and wealth, and injoyes yet meanes, and helpes, and now growes careless; as to morrow I will repent, it is too soone yet, I will take my pleasure now, and repent when I am old; now Gods goodnesse comes to be wearied, that he saith, *I will strive no more.*

Fourthly, When Gods goodnesse is wearied, then the patience of the Lord steppes in, and pleades for a sin-

ſinner, and holds the hand of Juſtice; *Luke 9.* As the Figge-tree that beares no fruit, ſaith Chriſt, *I have come theſe three yeeres, and expected fruit, and have found none; cut it down.* Stay Lord ſaith the Keeper of the Vineyard, another yeare, it may be it will beare then; ſo ſaith *Patience*, the ſinner hath broken thy Commandements, and deſpiſed thy Ordinances, abuſed thy Sabbathes; Oh forbeare, ſaith *Patience*, one yeare longer, one opportunity more. Now as *Patience* doth pleade for Gods continuance of mercy to a ſinner, ſo it prevailes; now when *Patience* is tyred, and wearied with wicked men, as *Ierem.* 5. *How ſhall I beare,*

beare, as if he would ſcarce forbeare; then when *Patience* is tired, comes *Long-ſuffering*; ſaith *Patience*, I forbore this time and that time; ſaith *Long-ſuffering*, Stay Lord another yeare, another moneth: marke the Text, *Fourty yeares long was I grieved with this people*; Conſider you old men, fourtie yeares the Lord hath ſtrove with you; and you young men, God could have taken you away in your ſin; Oh I ſay, thinke upon *Long-ſuffering*, for elſe you had periſhed before now, old gray-headed men; Oh for the Lords ſake conſider this mercy, fourty yeares a contemner of Gods Word, fourty yeares a deſpiſer of the meanes

meanes of Grace; oh consider this mercy. Thus the Lord ſummons the ſinner, then caſts him; the ſinner in his naturall eſtate, knowes not what he is, and when hee is caſt downe, God comforts him, and then, if the ſoule grow careleſſe that Gods goodneſſe is wearied, then ſteppes in *Patience*, and when *Patience* is wearied, then comes in *Long-ſuffering*; Now ſay, Lord thou cameſt home to me ſuch a day, ſuch a atime, I promiſed to come in, but I have not; Oh Lord it is thy mercy, I yet continue, that I am not conſumed.

Secondly, by conſtraint, he conſtraines them by an execution, this is in a ſevere manner

ner, as appeares in three particulars, when the Goodneſſe, Patience, Long-ſuffering of God will not ſerve the turne.

Firſt, he lets his heavie anger fall on him, and take him by the throat and ſayes, you will not come, but you ſhall feele my anger and heavy hand for your contempt; as a man in ſuite of Law, if he be caſt, and the other deale mercifully with him, gives him a day, and he deſpiſes it; then he arreſts him, & caſts him in priſon; ſo God deals with a ſoule that diſpiſes his mercy, then he arreſts him, and caſts him in priſon. *Iob* 15.24,25. Trouble and anguiſh ſhall make him affraid, they ſhall prevaile againſt him

him, as a King ready to the battell, for he ſtretches out his hand againſt God, and ſtrengtheneth himſelfe againſt the Almighty, as *Pharaoh* ſaid, Ile not let them goe, who is the Lord? So here he flies in his face, as in the 26, he runneth upon him, even upon his necke, upon the thick boſſes of his bucklers: marke, they that would kill one another, ſtrike not where the other can defend themſelves, but God need not doe ſo, he will runne on the thick boſſes of the bucklers, and cruſh the vanitie of his ſoule; this is the firſt; thus you ſee he is arreſted.

Secondly, and caſt in priſon, then the truth and Juſtice of God, when the Sinner is arreſted

arreſted and caſt into priſon, layes an action againſt the poore ſinner, and ſheweth him Gods former dealing; as a man caſt in priſon, firſt an action comes of twenty pound, another of an hundred, and ſo breakes him for ever: ſo it is with a poore ſoule, when the truth of God and Juſtice of God, layes Action upon Action, it breakes him for ever; in a word, it ſhewes him Gods former dealing, his mercy, goodneſſe, patience, and long-ſuffering, and every one of them he ſees; you will aske, in whoſe ſuite? In Mercies ſuite, and goodneſſe, in Patience, and Long-ſufferings ſuit; they will have their Actions tryed, becauſe

they have been abuſed, and the more mercy, the more indignation to thoſe that have abuſed Mercy and Patience.

Thirdly, After the wrath of God hath arreſted him, and the Truth and Juſtice of God laid Action upon Action, ſo that everlaſting ruine is ready to ceaſe on him, then at laſt comes Mercy and bailes him; here it is that the Armes of God are open, for all his mercies cry for a ſinner at laſt to come in. *Ezekiel 16. Turneyee to the Lord, for why will ye dye, Oh houſe of Iſrael?* Mercy ſayes, come to me, and I will pay all; though there bee much guiltineſſe of conſcience, I will remove it. *Actes*

30.

30. *As many as beleeved in him ſhall be freed from that*, that *Moſes* could not free them; he does not ſay, all the wiſe onely, but all that will beleeve, whether Drunkards, wicked, all that will beleeve, the gate ſtands open to them.

Queſt. True ſaith the ſoule, they that God hath reſtrained before; but my ſins are great, ſhall I have mercie?

Anſw. The Text ſayes, whoſoever that beleeves ſhall be freed from all. *Heb.* 6. If you ſinne willingly, then you have not had Juſtice, Goodneſſe, Patience, Long-ſuffering; at laſt comes Mercy which is the laſt, the which if ye deſpiſe and re-

fuſe, ye can look for nothing but the heavie diſpleaſure of God; Oh conſider with thy ſelfe, hath the Lord ſpared me this time; many checks of conſcience, a good father and mother to inſtruct me, and yet alive! Lord, what a mercy is this?

Reaſ. Why God ſtrives thus with a ſinner; firſt, that he might expreſſe his mercy, and that the world might know he is merciſull, and rejoyce in it.

Secondly, that he might leave the world without excuſe, that if they goe downe to the bottomeleſſe pit, thanke themſelves.

Vſe. 1. Of inſtruction. I beſeech you to admire the goodneſſe of God to ſinners,

and withall our rebellions, when God ſtrives ſo long for our good, and we ſtrive ſo long againſt it; is not hee then good? evill is the man that nothing will doe good of. Foule is the Leper that all the water in the Sea will not waſh; and great is the ſpot that no water will bring out. Labour to bring this home to your ſelves, ſee your ſpots in this particular, that after you have had ſo much goodnes of the Lord, and ſo much Mercy, Patience, and Long-ſuffering, to draw and prevaile with your rebellious hearts, and all have beene abuſed, neglected, and contemned by you; Oh let every one ſay it to their own hearts, ſay thou, good Lord,

they in Hell never had ſuch means as I have, therfore they ſhal fare better at the laſt day then I ſhall; are there ſuch hearts as theſe in Hell? compare your ſelves, for I know that the Word ſometimes meets with thee: ſay Lord, it was againſt this Drunkard, he is come home, and againſt that ſinner, and he is come, but if I ſtand out I am worſt of all.

Vſe 2. If this be ſo that God ſtrives with a poore ſinner for his good, and the ſinner ſtrives againſt the goodneſſe and mercy of God; then mark what wee gather; when they goe to Hell, they have their deſires, they ſtrive to goe to Hell; as if one would ſtrive for wages;

wages; Know it is the deviſe of your mindes, and deſires of your hearts, yee ſtrive who ſhould ſweare the moſt, if you goe to Hell, then thanke your ſelves. *Pro.* 1. 30, 31. *They would have none of my counſell, they deſpiſed all my reproofe: therefore they ſhall eate of the fruit of their owne wayes, and be filled with their owne deviſes.* When a ſoule is reſolved to goe in his olde courſe, as the covetous man, I will be covetous, the contemner of the Word will live looſely, and will not be reproved by Miniſters; theſe deſire their owne deſtruction. Oh poore ſoule, when thou goeſt to hell, thou ſhalt have thy deſire, and elbowe-roome

enough there.

Vse 3. Is of reproofe. Doth God ſtrive with ſinners, for their good? what ſhall wee thinke of them that ſtrive with men for their hurt? either God muſt bee blamed for dealing ſo, or they condemned for being in oppoſition with God: judge you, I will ſay nothing; the Lord ſtrives; he uſes Mercy, Juſtice, Goodneſſe, to draw them to him, and they uſe all meanes, threatnings, all to withdraw them; either God is to be blamed for dealing ſo, or they to be condemned: they are the Devils Captaines, and give preſſe money: as if a Wife, Childe, or Servant begins to looke to heaven, then the

Husband

Husband frownes, the Maſter chides; Oh lay your hands on your hearts, for the Devill can do no more; Oh know not onely thy ſinnes ſhall condemne thee; but the blood of Wives, Children and Servants; Oh brethren, I beſeech you heare, feare, and tremble. *Acts* 15. 8, 9. The Text ſaith, that *Paul* came to the Iland, and found the Deputy of the Iland in the faith. *Paul* would have brought him to the faith, and *Elimas* would have drawne him from the faith; marke what *Paul* ſaid in the 10 verſe, thou Childe of the Devill, becauſe *Elimas* would not goe to Hell himſelfe alone, he drawes others; and *Paul* comes with

fire and thundring, as it were, Oh childe of the Devill, oh enemie of all righteouſneſſe; The Adulterer is an enemie to Chaſtity, the Drunkard to ſoberneſſe, the unjuſt man is an enemy to Juſtice, but they that ſtrive to hinder any from God are enemies to all righteouſneſſe.

To conclude: You ſay you would have prayed, but my Husband would not let mee, I would have gone to Church, but my Maſter would not let me; this will not ſerve the turne, it will be no plea for you to ſay, Maſters hinder you. *Matth.* 23. *Woe to you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites, that compaſſe Sea and Land to*

make

make a Proſelite, and when he is ſo made, you make him two fold more the childe of the Devill then your ſelves; they are the children of the Devill, that is enough in conſcience; but you are twice more the childe of the Devill: conſider you ſinne, and hinder me from God, you ſhall goe to Hell, but I ſhall be twice more the child of Hell then you; oh then feare and labour every one to mend one another.

Vſe 4. Is of exhortation. Doth the Lord ſo ſtrive and uſe all meanes to draw us to him: doth God doe ſo? then doe you ſo alſo, whereſoever thou goeſt, doe thou ſtrive to perſwade men, and draw them from evill, *Hebr.*

3.

3. The Lord ſtrives with a poore ſinner for his good: now as God and Chriſt deales, ſo let us; lay hold on a wicked Father, a profane mother, exhort them, pray for them, *Timoth.* 2. 2. Strive with them, though they ſtrive againſt thee: thou prayeſt once, pray againe, it may be God will heare. When a man is laid in his grave, yet his ſtock remaines and goes forward, and ſhall doe till the day of Doome; what a ſweet comfort will this be to them that doe good to others; you that goe in companies and aſſemblies with others, &c. ſtrive to draw them on in goodneſſe, by exhortations, and ſometimes by reproofes,

that

that if it be possible, you may prevaile with their hearts, to come in and take mercy.

Doctr. 3. That after the long abuse of meanes, the Lord ceases to strive wth men therein, and takes either the meanes from them, or them from the meanes, or his blessing from them both; *I will strive*, saith God, *but not always; when the time is expired, further is not to bee expected.* God hath bounds of his bounty, hitherto and no further, as it is with the Sunne, it hath it's times, Spring, and Harvest; and there is a time to leave to Winter, and blastning: there is a time of consuming the store, as well as bringing of

of it in; ſo it is with the Sonne of Righteouſneſſe; there is a time to quicken the Graces of his, and to ripen them; and there is a time to leave men to hardneſſe of heart, in the darkeneſſe of Egypt, that they may be rid of the Word. There is a ſeaſon of grace, but that endures not alwayes; God hath his ſeaſons to be mercifull; ſome the Sunne-ſhine of Gods goodneſſe comforts, and makes grow, and ſome growes away; the Goſpel is going, when *Ephraim* was going to Idolatry, *Hoſea* 4. *Ephraim* is going away to Idolatry, let him alone, he hath made a match with miſchiefe, let him have his

his belly full of it, now it is Tearme-time, but there is a Vacation too.

FINIS.

A GODLY AND FRVITFVLL SERMON:

THE PLANTATION of the RIGHTEOVS.

By *T. H.*

LONDON,
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dwelling in Black-Horſe-Alley
neere Fleetſtreet. 1639.

THE PLANTATION of the RIGHTEOVS.

PSAL. 1.3.

But he ſhall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in due ſeaſon, his leafe alſo ſhall not wither, and whatſoever he doth ſhall proſper.

THis third verſe diſcovers a third branch of the difference of a godly, and alſo a godleſſe man; they are con-

contrary in their practiſes, and in their wayes and doings, and ſo likewiſe ſhall they be contrary in their accounts at the laſt day. Three particulars in the verſe, doe diſcover themſelves unto us; Firſt, this righteous man, he brings forth fruit; ſecondly, it is his owne fruit, not another mans; thirdly, it is in his fitteſt time, and in the beſt ſeaſon, it's ſeaſonable fruite; and this wee are to ſcanne, and a little to treat withall: and the Doctrine that doth preſent it ſelfe to our conſideration, is this, namely,

Doct. 1. A good man doth not onely what he ought to doe, he doth not onely performe this duty, and what God

God requires of him, but he doth it in the fitteſt ſeaſon and opportunity. In a word, the duties of Saints ought to bee ſeaſonable: the point is ſomewhat ſtrange to ſome, one that is little knowne, and as little practiſed among moſt; a marvellous skill is in it, and but litle skill men have to obſerve it; marvellous great good in it, and but little labouring to attaine that good; whereas it is a part of prudence to obſerve times as the Text cals on us, *to redeeme the time:* and therefore we will open the point, and then treat with it; and firſt we will prove the ſame; ſecondly, wee will ſhew the grounds and reaſons; thirdly, apply the ſame; firſt, for the

the proofe of it, *Eccleſ.* 3. 2. *There is a time and a ſeaſon for every thing*; that is Gods will and pleaſure. *Eccleſ.* 10. 6. It is there accounted one of the greateſt woes and curſes, as it were, and evils that befall men. *Woe to thee, O Land, when thy King is a childe, and thy Princes eate in the morning:* But on the contrary; *Bleſſed art thou oh Land when thy King is the ſonne of Nobles, and thy Princes doe eate for ſtrength, and not for drunkenneſſe.* Thus we ſee what a great curſe it is to any Land to have Princes eat and drinke not in ſeaſon, and in *Prov.* 25. the Text there ſaith, *That a word ſpoke in due ſeaſon, is like Apples of gold, with pictures of ſilver.*

ſilver. So there is a ſeaſon both for words and ſpeeches, as well as for actions and deeds, and words in their beſt ſeaſon, are worth Pearles and Rubies: So that the proofe is plaine, that the Saints of God muſt have their opportunities for the performance of duties, and a thing much to bee oberved; Froſt wee know is ſeaſonable in Winter. Harveſt is ſeaſonable in Summer time, every thing is beſt in the ſeaſon.

Queſt. The difficulty that hence ariſeth, is, how a man may diſcerne the ſeaſon of a ſervice and duty that is to bee performed by us; for here is the maine waight of the point.

Anſw.

Answ. First, in the generall; secondly, in particular: First, when all the circumstances and occasions do concurre for a dutie; that is, the season and the time for the dutie, as instance thus: it is the season for a man to walke in the day time, in the light, and not in the the darknesse. It is true, it is time enough, in the night to walke in, but it is not the season; it doth not fit the season so well as in the day time; in the light, Wind and Tide for a Seafaring man; warme weather is the season for sowing, and for casting the Seed into the ground; so it is in this case, a Christian should observe the season, and take the best time for dutie in this case, when

when all occaſions and circumſtances ſuite; and this is in the generall.

Secondly, in particular, there is a ſeaſon that a man muſt look at, both in his particular, & in his generall calling, both in regard as he is a Chriſtian, and in reſpect of the place God hath ſet a man in; in the which we ought for to make our ſeaſon: for the doing of our duties and the rules for our direction herein, are theſe, namely;

Firſt, We muſt be ſure to let each and every time have the allowance, or the ſhare, as I may ſo ſay, that concerne that day, and that time; as there are changes, for to morrow Services; for a firſt, and a ſe-

cond day, and third day, and that of our Saviour Christ is obſervable, *Matth. 6. Take no thought for to morrow, for ſufficient to the day is the evill thereof:* Every day brings evill enough with it; there are ſinnes enough this day, and faylings, and imperfections enough this day, and therefore no need there is to take care for a ſecond and third day; every day brings ſinnes enough with it, evill enough with it, and therefore we had not need to take care for another day, what ſhall be to morrow, and not on Munday to take care for Tueſday, not on Tueſday to care for Wedneſday, becauſe each day bringeth enough care and trouble with it;

it; for every time hath as it were, a challenge to it ſelfe, this day can ſay, this is mine; another can ſay, this is mine; there is a time and a ſeaſon for every ſervice, *ſufficient to the day is the evill thereof:* So likewiſe ſufficient to the day is the duties thereof; there is prayer for this day, and prayer for that day, not for another day, that is uncertain whether it will come, but there is ſervice ſuted, and to be performed for the day preſent; God requireth to keepe the preſent day, and to doe duty that is for the preſent.

Secondly, Looke when we find our bodies and natures beſt diſpoſed for ſervices, then we ought to take

them up, and then to beſtow our ſtrength on the beſt of our ſervices; inſtance, for a man to goe to prayer, when hee is fitteſt to ſleepe, or when ſleepe comes on him, or when he is in his bed, that is not ſeaſonable; It is then out of it's ſeaſon and time, that inſtead of prayer, a man goeth to ſleeping and wrangling with the dutie: and therefore wee muſt take the advantage of our natures in this caſe, as men that uſe to take advantage of Wind and Tide, to ſale forwards: ſo muſt a Chriſtian take advantage of his nature in this caſe, then when time is moſt ſeaſonable, they muſt performe duties; It is that God cannot away with, when wee will

will ſerve him onely in a rainy day, when he can doe nothing elſe; when every thing elſe is done, then God muſt be ſerved laſt; this is the next way to bring a curſe on us, and our ſervices that we doe performe to him. It is the charge the Holy Ghoſt giveth; *Honour the Lord with the firſt-fruites of thy increaſe*, and to ſuch hee annexeth his promiſe, *ſo ſhall thy barnes be filled with plenty*, ſaith the Text; and in the Old Law God required the firſt that opened the wombe, and therefore a man muſt take the riſe of a lazie nature, and to take heed of this ſinne, as that that brings a great curſe with it, as you may ſee, *Malac.* 1. latter end,

Curſed be the deceiver, as who ſhouldſay, He is a deceiver indeed that offers a female to God, when hee hath a male in his flocke; when a man hath ſtrong deſires for himſelfe, male ſorrowes for his own ends, but female for God: this is the ſecond perticular.

Thirdly, Wee ſhould ſo take up duties, ſo order them that one ſhould bee helpfull to another, and not a hinderance; No man can looke to many Irons in the fire at once, but when the iron is hot, then to ſtrike; that is the ſeaſon for it to bee wrought on; So a Chriſtian muſt take the ſeaſon to forecaſt duties, not to hinder one with another, but every dutie

dutie muſt be ſo performed, that it may further and not hinder another: as it is with a Wagon, the little Wheeles goe before to make way for the greater that come after them, and the greater follow after, and ſerve to drive on the former. Thus one is helpfull to the other; ſo ſhould we doe with duties, ſo to forecaſt it, and ſo to performe it, that one duty may further another, and not hinder; ſo that this is the ſeaſon when one dutie maketh way for another in the kinde; and hence follow ſeverall paſſages, as grounds of application. Firſt, it is hence cleare that a man ſhould ſo performe duty to God, that the one may

put forwards another to help another on. The ſecond rule hence is alſo cleare, that a man muſt ſo forecaſt duties, that the particular may not croſſe the generall, nor the generall the particular; a man muſt not ſpend himſelfe, ſo in his calling in particular, as to make him unfit for performance of duties, in his generall calling; he muſt not take up time in his own buſines, as therby to deprive himſelfe of time and ſtrength for duties of Gods worſhip.

Thirdly, a man may hence learne, that he ought not to ſpend his ſtrength in one duty, as to make him unfit for another, for that is not in ſeaſon; then we miſſe of the ſeaſon; though hee allow time

time for the dutie, if yet he ſpend his ſtrength in one as to be unfit for another; this is unſeaſonable.

Now for duties occaſionally: and we may obſerve two rules for the clearing of the point.

Firſt, if they be ſuch occaſions that may be omitted, as likewiſe they would hinder another, a man may paſſe it by; but if a duty that comes in a mans way, that requireth preſent ſupply, and that the duty in a mans common courſe may be gained againe, and if the other be omitted, that can never be recalled againe, or recovered: Now this is a ſeaſon for an occaſionally duty, as thus; a man to pray in his family:

now if a neceſſary occaſion come that cannot be done afterwards, a man muſt omit prayer for the while, for that may afterwards be gained, but the other it cannot be recovered againe.

Secondly, if the caſe be ſo, that one duty muſt be loſt, a man cannot regaine both of them; what then muſt wee doe, both cannot be omitted, which then muſt be taken up and performed? To this ſeverall rules might be added; but take this, looke what duty is the moſt excellent and neceſſary, take up that duty, and let the other paſſe; if a duty that is more excellent then another, take up that, and let the other give place to it: as for example, God will

will have mercy and not ſacrifice, and hee delights in mercy more then ſacrifice; if a man have a houſe on fire, and another hath his duty to performe before hee can helpe the other: why God requires mercy, he will have mercy rather then ſacrifice, and therefore I muſt leave the duty and help him, becauſe God requireth mercy as a duty that is higher in place, and of more worth and excellency; other duties muſt give place, and ſuch duties muſt take the place, that is the ſeaſon for the inferiour to give place to the greater.

Queſt. How can a man know the preheminence of any duty? That which concernes

cernes first Gods glory most, that service is to be performed, before the other that concernes a mans selfe, the good of man gives place to Gods glory; sometimes workes of mercy are most to Gods glory, and all things are to be to Gods glory:

Secondly, in those duties that concerne man, I must take notice of the things themselves, and of my relation to them; as I must looke to mine owne occasions before other mens, in the same ranke, in things of equality; as my goods before his, my body before his, but not my body before his soule; onely I say comparing equall things together concerning other men: if they be both equall

equall to me, let the chiefeſt things take place, as life before goods; Why a man ſhould be ſo carefull for his ſeaſon.

Reaſ. Firſt, becauſe this addes beauty to all occaſions, and the workes come off with much content, ſeaſonably, ſweetly, with much ſuccour; Oh how good is a word ſpoken in due ſeaſon! *Prov.* 25. and 11. when a man ſayles with the Tide, and ſtrikes while the yron is hot, and not to delay duties to a crowd, then is the ſeaſon: So in the worke of grace, when men delay untill the laſt houre, and the dimme eye, and death bed, when death and conſcience, and all begin to crowd on a man.

Confi-

Conſidering the opportunities God hath beſtowed, and he abuſed all, and now is not like to have them again; theſe ſuit not with occaſions, and fit not the ſeaſons, but will adde more wounds and griefe to the ſoule of man; whereas if they were in their beſt ſeaſon, they would come off with a great deale more eaſe.

Secondly, becauſe things find beſt ſucceſſe when they come in ſeaſon: the corne that is ſown in ſeaſon, is moſt like to grow and thrive, by reaſon of the ſeaſon that it was ſowne in, ſo that the ſeaſon makes the worke to goe on the better and the eaſier; and therefore the wiſe man calls

calls on men, *Eccleſ.* 14. *To remember their Creator in the dayes of youth,* before old and evill dayes come, for old are but euill daies; then is out of ſeaſon, it is not the beſt ſeaſon then: for a thing out of ſeaſon, is like Phyſicke that is brought to a man when he is dead, we ſay you ſhould have come ſooner, and then there might have beene ſome hope of life and recovery; when a man is in ſtrength, then is the time of praying, reading, and hearing the Word, &c. but God ſeldome gives the grace of repentance in the dog-dayes of his yeares. Be wiſe now in the dayes of your youth, or elſe you will repent with a ſad heart at the laſt when you

have loſt the ſeaſon of grace and mercy.

Vſe. Is it ſo that men doe their duties in ſeaſon, let this then bee a word of try all and examination in this caſe, to ſee how we have beene faulty and have failed in this kind, to ſee and be humbled for what hath beene amiſſe in us: let each man lay his hand on his mouth, and bewaile and looke backe, and view our former courſe, to conſider the opportunities and ſeaſons we have had for our good, or might have enjoyed at leaſt for our good, and wee have neglected them; that God hath ſet open his hand, and offered his grace and kindneſſe, and beſought us to be reconciled to him,

him, as it were, and hath given us a market day, a faire gaile, and yet have come empty from it; looke backe to the chamber where ſometimes a man hath beene, and ſome ſweet motions, God hath put into his mind, oh pray now for your ſelves, and the Church, and yet hath caſt all theſe motions behind his backe, and ſlighted them as things of no moment or wight at all; let us looke to all theſe former neglects, and ſlightenings of grace and mercy, offered to us; and as *Pharaohs* Butler ſaid, ſo let us: *I call to remembrance my faults and ſinnes this day*; and thus much for the firſt: the ſecond followes, and that is this, namely, of Inſtruction;

It

Vſe. It teacheth us thus much, that the life and converſation of a Chriſtian is a marvellous, tedious, and laborious life that wil marveilouſly put a man to it, if ever he come to be ſincere, and to walke uprightly with the Lord in a holy converſation of life.

Thirdly, a ground of encouragement; ſince then that we know what we ſhould, to labour to do what we know; ſince we know what God requireth, and will pleaſe him, let us ſet about that he commands, and will be ſo acceptable in his ſight; ſeeing wee know what God hath chalked out before us, and what will beſt delight him, and alſo be exceeding comforta-

fortable to our ſelves, let us ſet about this; let us pray in ſeaſon, heare the Word in ſeaſon, performe duties in ſeaſon, let our words and ſpeeches be in due ſeaſon ſpoken, becauſe duties performed to God in ſeaſon, are very pleaſing to him, and will bring great comfort to our owne ſoules and conſciences; and any thing out of ſeaſon, is diſpleaſing unto God; a thing out of ſeaſon, a man cannot away with it; therefore how is it, to meditate, pray, heare, reade, conferre, and doe all holy duties in ſeaſon; but the queſtion here groweth, how ſhall we doe this? for our rules of direction herein are theſe, namely;

Anſw.

Answ. First, see and view the compasse of all busines-ses, foreseeing all occasions, and then allotting to every time, and to each occasion, range it all proportionably to each occasion, a severall time, as will suit it best, observing the former rules that was mentioned: so in the next place, labour we to prevent the time and the seasons, get beforehand, as it were, with time for the duties of Gods worship and service, in this case, take time in the morning, *I will prevent the morning watch*, saith *David*; he got beforehand with his Nobles, that when they were come, hee might bee fit to goe and conferre and take their time together:

gether: when all was faſt, then he got himſelfe to his duty; ſo we ſhould prevent the time, and when we have ſo done, to improve it.

Fiftly, then cut off all unneceſſary expence of time; Labour to be beforehand in the world, get that wiſedome, that courage, and that care that may ſhake off all ſleeveleſſe occaſion that are not worth the while, both for your care and conſideration.

Pſalm. 1. v. 3. *His leafe alſo ſhall not wither.*

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